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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HSA
Health Resources & Services Administration

National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News

July 2003

Query Fee Decrease: July 1, 2003



As of July 1, 2003, the fee per name for each Data Bank queried is \$4.25, a 15 percent reduction from the previous \$5.00 fee. The change affects both the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB). The self-query fee remains at \$10 per name for each Data Bank queried. For information related to query fees, see the *Federal Register* notices at www.npdb-hipdb.com.

Helpful Hints from the Data Banks

KEEP YOUR COMPUTER UPDATED!

Periodically, the Data Banks provide notices in this newsletter and on the Data Banks' web site (www.npdb-hipdb.com) that you may need to update your Internet browser or other software used by the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS). Since the NPDB-HIPDB is programmed to use these browser and software versions, if your computer is not updated, you may encounter difficulties using the IQRS as system enhancements are added. Currently, the IQRS supports Netscape Communicator 4.77, 7.0, or 7.01 (as of June 30, 2003), and Internet Explorer 5.5 SP1, 5.5 SP2, or 6.0. Adobe Acrobat Reader software, version 4.0 or above, is required to access Portable Document Format (PDF) files. To upgrade your internet browser, go to www.npdb-hipdb.com and use the browser links listed at the bottom of the home page. To upgrade your version of Acrobat Reader, go to www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html. The browser upgrades and Acrobat Reader can be downloaded free of charge; however, a connection fee may apply in some cases.

QUERYING AND REPORTING ONE NAME AT A TIME? USE A SUBJECT DATABASE INSTEAD!

If you send multiple reports or need to query on the same practitioners on a regular basis, consider creating a subject database, using the IQRS subject database feature. Creating a subject database lets you avoid keying in the same names and identifying information over and over again. You can now add subject names to a database while submitting a query or report; see the article (*Automatically Create a Subject Database or Save to Your Current Database*) on page 5 for details.

CHANGE YOUR ENTITY PROFILE ON-LINE!

Remember that you need to change your entity profile in the event of a merger or acquisition, location change, or point of contact change.

Entity and agent administrators should make profile changes on-line through the IQRS. After logging in, select **Update Profile** on the *Administrator Options* screen to update your entity's or agent's profile information.

See *Helpful Hints* on page 4

Why Should I Query the HIPDB?

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), acting through the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Attorney General (Department of Justice), was directed by the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996* to create the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) to combat fraud and abuse in health insurance and health care delivery. Health care fraud burdens the nation with enormous financial costs and threatens the quality of health care and patient safety. Estimates of annual losses due to health care fraud range from 3 to 10 percent of all health care expenditures.

Background of the HIPDB

The HIPDB is a national data collection program for the reporting and disclosure of certain final adverse actions taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. It is intended to augment, not replace, traditional forms of review and investigation. The HIPDB serves as an important supplement to a careful review of a practitioner's, provider's, or supplier's past actions.

Federal and State Government agencies and health plans are **eligible to query** and **required to report** to the HIPDB. The HIPDB is a tool that authorized entities can use to verify the credentials of a health care practitioner, provider, or supplier, giving your organization additional assurance that the practitioners, providers, and suppliers that you employ or contract with are both ethical and professionally competent.

Who Queries and Reports to the HIPDB?

Each entity is responsible for determining its eligibility to participate in

the HIPDB and must certify its eligibility in writing. To determine if you are eligible to query or are required to report to the HIPDB, see the *Fact Sheet on the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank*, available at www.npdb-hipdb.com.

When individual health care practitioners, providers, or suppliers self-query, their self-query applications are automatically run against both the NPDB and the HIPDB to ensure full disclosure. Since the NPDB only contains reports concerning individual practitioners, organizational self-queries are sent only to the HIPDB.

What Does the HIPDB Provide That the NPDB Does Not?

The HIPDB contains:

1. Licensure and certification actions against all practitioners, providers, and suppliers.
2. Health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments (excluding medical malpractice payments, which are housed in the NPDB) against all practitioners, providers, and suppliers.
3. Adjudicated actions taken by health plans against practitioners, providers, and suppliers (e.g., a contract termination by a health plan against a physician).

Data Available in the HIPDB

The HIPDB now has almost 5,000 Federal and State health care-related judgments or convictions dating back to 1996 on more than 4,000 practitioners and administrators. Individuals in the HIPDB are responsible for more than \$75 million in civil judgments, \$11 million of which is attributed to reported physicians, pharmacists, and

registered nurses. Nearly 1,000 of these reports involve patient abuse.

The HIPDB collects and disseminates reports to eligible queriers on:

- ◆ Health care-related civil judgments taken in Federal or State court.
- ◆ Health care-related criminal convictions taken in Federal or State court.
- ◆ Injunctions.
- ◆ Exclusions from participation in Federal or State health care programs.
- ◆ Federal or State licensing and certification actions, including revocations, reprimands, censures, probations, suspensions, and any other loss of license, or the right to apply for or renew a license, whether by voluntary surrender, non-renewability, or otherwise.
- ◆ Any other adjudicated actions or decisions defined in the HIPDB regulations (45 CFR Part 61).

Practitioners and administrators with questionable backgrounds may seek positions within your organization. Reduce your risk of liability. Thoroughly investigate the background of those providing care to your patients or making decisions on behalf of your institution by querying the HIPDB. The HIPDB is unique in that it contains information on important health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments, licensure/certification and health plan actions on nurses' aides, business owners, Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), accountants,

Save Your Credit Card Information in the IQRS!

Entities: Did you know that you now have the option to store your credit card information in the IQRS to facilitate easier and faster payment for Data Bank queries? That's right. Effective June 30, 2003, if your IQRS administrator sets up a credit card account in the IQRS, you no longer need to enter credit card information each time you submit a query. If you wish, you may continue to enter a credit card number each time you query. Also, entities with an active Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) account on file at the time a query is submitted have the option to direct query charges to the EFT account, charge queries to a saved credit card on file, or specify a different credit card to charge.

To save information on a particular credit card for future use, your entity's IQRS administrator should select **Maintain IQRS Credit Card** on the *Administrator Options* screen, fill in the required fields, and select **Submit to Data Bank(s)** (see Figure 1: *Maintain IQRS Credit Card Screen*). Print the *Maintain IQRS Credit Card Confirmation* for your records, but do **not** mail it to the Data Banks. Entity users cannot modify stored credit card information; only the entity's administrator can add, modify, or delete saved credit card information. For security purposes, entity users do not see the full saved credit card account number. Only the last four digits of the credit card are displayed.

Coming to the Data Banks in November 2003, an entity's administrator may save information on multiple credit cards and designate which credit card number an entity user is authorized to utilize for query payments. For example, if an entity's IQRS administrator wishes to assign certain entity users to use one saved credit

card and other entity users to use another credit card, he or she may do so. In addition, an entity's IQRS administrator may edit and remove an entity user's assignment to a specific

credit card. More information on these upcoming options will be available in the October issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. 📧

Figure 1. Maintain IQRS Credit Card Screen.

Help Us Ensure a Perfect Match

Have you wondered why the Data Banks ask you for so much subject identifying information when you submit a query? When the Data Banks receive a query or self-query, subject identifying information in the query is compared with reports in the NPDB-HIPDB according to a set of matching criteria. The Data Banks compare several data elements to protect subject privacy and ensure correct reports are disclosed regarding a health care practitioner, provider, or supplier.

Table 1: *Required and "If Known" Data Elements for Matching in Queries* (see page 6) lists the mandatory and optional querying elements for individual and organization subjects. The Data Banks allow certain fields to be left blank **if the querier can provide other fields in their place**; i.e., for individual subjects, the querier must enter the subject's Social Security Number (SSN); however, if the SSN is unknown, the querier

See **Matching** on page 6

Upcoming: HIPDB Guidebook Updates



Entities should be on the lookout for the updated HIPDB

Guidebook,

available this fall on the NPDB-HIPDB web site. The *Guidebook* will include more detailed information about querying and reporting to the HIPDB. Some of the new features will include a technical assistance chapter which consolidates information from various chapters in the *Guidebook*. By presenting technical information according to user type, Data Bank users can quickly find the information they require. For instance, Interface Control Document Transfer Protocol (ITP) users will be able to look up the steps for using ITP in the technical assistance chapter, and portions of the chapter will also address issues specific to IQRS users. Policy information will continue to be available in other areas of the *Guidebook*.

When accessing the *Guidebook* on-line, readers will be able to quickly retrieve other helpful materials, such as fact sheets and other relevant web-based documents, through links embedded in the *Guidebook* text. These links will minimize the need to use search engines or other means to find information outside of the *Guidebook*. Links will also connect the reader to related information in other chapters of the *Guidebook*, facilitating user navigation within the *Guidebook* itself. 📖

Helpful Hints from page 1

Some information may be automatically updated on-line; other types of information require that an original signature be received by the Data Banks before the change can go into effect. The IQRS provides guidance on which updates require an original signature. This information is also available in the *Fact Sheet on Updating Profile Information Through the IQRS*, located at www.npdb-hipdb.com.

✓ **CONTACT YOUR CREDIT CARD COMPANY ABOUT REJECTED CREDIT CARDS!**

If you receive an IQRS rejection notice due to missing or invalid credit card information, please contact your credit card company to resolve the problem. The Data Banks reject queries for invalid credit cards on the advice of the cardholder's credit card company and cannot confirm the accuracy of credit card information. If you must use the same credit card, please wait until the problem is resolved before resubmitting the query for which there was a rejected credit card. You may also resubmit the query using a different credit card, or, if your entity has established a pre-authorized EFT account with the Data Banks, you may choose EFT payment.

✓ **EFT ACCOUNT ON HOLD? CALL YOUR ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT, THEN CALL THE DATA BANKS!**

There are several reasons that you may receive notification that your IQRS EFT account is on hold: (1) the EFT account information on file with the Data Banks is no longer valid; (2) there are insufficient funds in the EFT account; (3) debits are not authorized against the account; or

(4) your entity has closed the EFT account you had set up with the Data Banks for query payment. If an EFT payment cannot be processed, the Data Banks put a "hold" on your IQRS EFT account to prevent further query payment charges until you contact the Data Banks with further instructions concerning the account.

If your EFT account is placed on hold, please contact your Accounting Department for the most recent information concerning the account, and then contact the Data Banks. This will ensure that the Billing Department is working with your most recent EFT account information and can resolve issues more quickly.

✓ **USE VIEW QUERY RESPONSE TO AVOID DUPLICATE QUERIES AND CHARGES!**

Find out if your query was successfully submitted before generating a possible duplicate query and incurring duplicate charges. Log in to the IQRS and select **View Query Response** on the *Options* screen to see if the query you submitted is marked "Pending." If it is, then the query was received by the Data Banks and does not need to be resubmitted.

✓ **LOCKED OUT? CONTACT YOUR IQRS ADMINISTRATOR TO RESET YOUR PASSWORD!**

If you have an expired password or have forgotten your password, ask your entity's IQRS administrator to reset your password. Your administrator may do this by accessing the *Maintain User Account* screen, available from his or her *Options* menu.

If you are an administrator and have an expired password or have forgotten your password, please contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732 for assistance. 📖

Automatically Create a Subject Database or Save to Your Current Database!

Entities: Avoid retyping names of practitioners on whom you frequently submit queries, reports, or both by creating a subject database. Using a subject database can help you avoid errors and save time once the database is created. To make using a subject database even easier, the Data Banks have automated the process of adding subjects to a database and creating a new database.

Effective June 30, 2003, you have the option of storing a report or query subject in your subject database at the time of querying or reporting. If you wish to store a subject of a query or report in a subject database, just select the box on the *Query Input* screen (Figure 2) or *Report Input* screen that indicates that you wish to store this subject in your subject database for use in future queries and/or reports. This box is located in the Certification section of the screen, right above the **Submit to Data Bank(s)** button.

Figure 2. *Query Input Screen.*

By checking this box, you can add the new subject to your database; if you do not have a subject database, one will automatically be created for you when you indicate you wish to store a name in your subject database. To avoid multiple listings for a subject in your database, be sure the subject has not

already been entered into the database before checking the box.

For more information on creating and maintaining a subject database, see the *Fact Sheet on Creating and Maintaining a Subject Database*, available at www.npdb-hipdb.com.

IQRS URP to Meet Prior to NAMSS Conference and Exhibition

The Division of Practitioner Data Banks (DPDB) will host an IQRS User Review Panel (URP) meeting prior to the National Association Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) Conference and Exhibition in San Antonio, TX. The NAMSS Conference and Exhibition, which is scheduled for October 1-3, 2003, opens with a reception on September 30, 2003 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The IQRS URP meeting will be held 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., on September 30, 2003, at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio, which is within walking distance of the Convention Center.

By hosting the IQRS URP just before the NAMSS Conference and Exhibition opens, DPDB is giving IQRS URP attendees both the opportunity to enhance their professional develop-


ment in the credentialing field and to give their input on the operations of the Data Banks. The meeting is closed to new participants; however, you may e-mail feedback to npdb-hipdb@sra.com or use the Customer Feedback Card on page 7.

The Data Banks Act on URP Recommendations

The primary mission of the IQRS URP is to discuss issues regarding the IQRS; identify new IQRS requirements; review current IQRS querying and reporting issues; and address NPDB-HIPDB operational issues.

Recommendations made at past IQRS URP meetings that are now features of the IQRS include:

- ◆ The ability to save subject data to a database or create a subject database when submitting a query or report (see article above).
- ◆ The ability to securely store entity credit card information in the IQRS. See the article on page 3 (*Save Your Credit Card Information in the IQRS*) for details.


In addition to hosting the IQRS URP prior to the NAMSS Conference and Exhibition, we will also have an informational display on the Data Banks at the Exhibition. If you are in San Antonio, pay us a visit! 

Matching from page 3

must enter instead the Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License, and License Number data fields. More information on data elements in queries and reports will be featured in the updated HIPDB *Guidebook*, available this fall.

Regardless of the minimum requirements, you should enter as much identification data as you have when submitting a query because the regulations creating the Data Banks

differ in what is required for submitting various types of reports. For example, regulations do not require reporters to enter SSNs for some types of reports; therefore, the Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License, and License Number data elements are especially important to ensure a successful match. Further details on the data elements required in reports will be featured in a future edition of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

The Data Banks' ability to correctly match queries with report subjects and retain subject confidentiality is dependent upon the accuracy of the subject identifying information you submit. Please do your part to ensure that the Data Banks can successfully match query subjects to reports on file. 

Data Field	Queries on Individuals	Queries on Organizations
Last Name	Required	
First Name	Required	
Organization Name	If Known	Required
Social Security Number (SSN)	Required if Name of Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License, and License Number are not all specified; otherwise If Known.	If Known (provided when SSN is used as FEIN).
Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)	If Known (provided if individual also maintains a FEIN).	Required if State of License and License Number are unknown; otherwise If Known.
State of License and License Number	Required if SSN is not specified; otherwise If Known; "No License" may be used.	Required if FEIN is not specified; otherwise If Known; "No License" may be used.
Occupation/Field of License	Required	Required
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Number	If Known	If Known
Unique Physician Identification Number (UPIN)	If Known	If Known
National Provider Identifier (NPI)	If Known	If Known
Gender	Required (but "Unknown" allowed)	
Professional School and Year of Graduation	Required if SSN is not specified; otherwise If Known	
Date of Birth	Required	
Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) Number		If Known
Medicare Provider/Supplier Number		If Known
Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Number		If Known
Organization Type		Required

Shaded areas indicate that the data element is not applicable for matching for that type of query.

Table 1. Required and "If Known" Data Elements for Matching in Queries

NPDB Executive Committee Meeting

The NPDB Executive Committee met on May 13, 2003, at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA. The Committee is composed of representatives of major NPDB constituencies, including hospitals and other health care entities, State medical and dental licensing boards, professional societies, and medical malpractice payers. Accreditation organizations, practitioner groups, and Federal agencies were also represented. The Associate Administrator for the Bureau of Health Professions (BHP), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) also took part in the meeting.

The Committee's mandate is to provide guidance to the NPDB contractor, SRA International, Inc. (SRA). The Committee Chairman is Ms. Jodi Schirling, National Association Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) and Manager, Corporate Credentialing, The Nemours Foundation. The Vice-Chairman is Dr. Norman Odyniec, American College of Surgeons.

DPDB and SRA delivered status reports on NPDB finances and operations. SRA representatives briefed the Committee on a possible Proactive Disclosure Service (PDS) in which registered entities that sign up for this option would be alerted to any new reports on a roster of practitioners they had submitted to the Data Banks. This would allow entities to be automatically notified of reports on practitioners between mandatory querying periods. The PDS would not replace current Data Bank querying methods; it is being evaluated as a potential enhancement to Data Bank functionality. No decisions regarding the implementation of this service have been made. The Committee provided useful comments and perspectives that will be invaluable to DPDB's further consideration of PDS implementation.

Other agenda items included a review of proposed changes to the Medical Malpractice Payment Report (MMPR) format and the status of possible

implementation of Section 1921 of the *Social Security Act*, which would allow reports to be added to the NPDB on a broader range of reports on both entities and health care practitioners. A draft report examining the issue of reporting residents to the NPDB was presented. The draft report was the product of a workgroup convened by the Committee in June 2001. After the group presented its draft report, the Executive Committee decided that each representative should have its organization review the draft paper, and the Committee will further discuss the report at its next meeting.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on September 23, 2003 in Arlington, VA. 🏠



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK CARD

Let us know what information you need about the Data Banks! Please give us any thoughts and suggestions you may have for future newsletter articles and submit this card by one of the following methods:

Fax: (703) 802-4109, ATTN: Beth Lewis

Mail: NPDB-HIPDB, P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832, ATTN: Beth Lewis

E-mail: npdb-hipdb@sra.com

To add any of your organization's staff to the *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* mailing list, please send the name and mailing information to the Customer Service Center via e-mail (npdb-hipdb@sra.com) or phone (1-800-767-6732).

On the Horizon

Credit card users will soon have another option for query payment. Beginning November 3, 2003, the Data Banks will begin accepting American Express.

The NPDB Executive Committee will meet on September 23, 2003. A meeting summary will be featured in a future issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

In February 2004, new fields will be added to the Medical Malpractice Payment Report (MMPR) in order to report separately some of the information now reported in the narrative description of the Payment Information section of the MMPR. This change is based on Center for Health Policy Studies (CHPS) recommendations to DPDB.

ITP users: ITP file formats are being improved with added features effective February 2004. New Interface Control Documents (ICDs) will be posted prior to February 2004 – check the Data Banks' web site (www.npdb-hipdb.com). If you prefer e-mail notification when new ICDs are available, contact the Customer Service Center (phone: 1-800-767-6732 or e-mail: npdb-hipdb@sra.com) and ask to be added to the "ITP E-Mail List."

The NPDB will be conducting an American Customer Satisfaction Index survey of reporters and queriers this fall. Watch for further announcements in upcoming editions of this newsletter and on www.npdb-hipdb.com.

HIPDB from page 2

vocational nurses, physicians, dentists, and many other individuals in the health care industry.

To review summaries of the number of Adverse Action Reports and Civil Judgment or Criminal Conviction Reports submitted to the HIPDB by professional category or organization and information source, go to www.npdb-hipdb.com and select "Data by Profession and State" on the NPDB-HIPDB home page.

Accessing the HIPDB gives queriers a comprehensive source to help verify background information on a prospective practitioner, provider, or supplier. Put the HIPDB to work for you! 🏥

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HUMAN SERVICES

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